

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Attached as Appendix A are replacement drawing sheets for Figs. 24 and 25.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the Application in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-39 are pending.

Claims 1, 2, 23 and 24 are rejected.

Claims 1, 3-22 and 25-39 are objected to.

Claim 1 has been amended. No new matter is added.

Status of the Drawings

Figures 24 and 25 are objected to for failing to include a legend designating them as prior art. Applicants submit herewith replacement sheets amending Figs. 24 and 25. In accordance with the Examiner's suggestion, these figures have been designated by the legend --Prior Art--. No new matter has been added by way of this amendment.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 3-22 and 25-39 include allowable subject matter. The claims stand objected to for depending upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Objections to the Claims

Claim 1 is objected to due to informalities. The Examiner states that the term "exceptional situation" recited in claim 1 is not defined and that one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of this feature. Claim 1 has been amended to remove this recitation without prejudice in order to further prosecution.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,239,568 to Sugitani et al. ("Sugitani"). The Examiner states that Sugitani discloses all of the features of claims 1 and 23. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 includes at least the following two features which are not disclosed or suggested in Sugitani.

First, claim 1 recites a "hysteresis loop with one side being a section of a line $X_n = +/- X_E$." Sugitani does not disclose this feature. Sugitani describes hysteresis loops that are continuously changing in value. With reference to the specific Figs. identified by the Examiner, namely Figs. 1, 9 and 18, these loops do not show any sides of a hysteresis loop "being a section of a line $X_n = +/- X_E$." All of these Figs. show plots having curved lines. Accordingly, none of the hysteresis loops include a section of a line. Further, Figs. 1, 9 and 18 are a comparison of steering reaction force and steering wheel angle. In contrast, the value represented by X is a turning displacement value, which is not shown in Figs. 1, 9 or 18. Thus, none of these Figs. show the recited feature.

Claim 1 also recites a turning instruction value calculating means that "includes means for generating hysteresis characteristics calculating said instruction value X_n when an absolute value $|\theta|$ of said steering angle θ exceeds a predetermined threshold value θ_E corresponding to an upper limit X_E of said turning displacement X." Sugitani does not disclose calculating an instruction value X_n when an absolute value of the steering value exceeds a predetermined threshold value, as recited in claim 1. Nor does Sugitani disclose a threshold value θ_E corresponding to an upper limit X_E of a turning displacement X, as also recited in claim 1. It is respectfully submitted that the section of Sugitani relied upon by the Examiner regarding these features, namely column 9, lines 31-62, does not disclose these features. Further, nowhere in Sugitani are such features described.

For the foregoing reasons claim 1 is patentable over Sugitani. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

Claim 23 depends from claim 1 and is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. In addition, claim 23 recites additional features which are not disclosed by Sugitani. Claim 23 recites "means for varying a steering angle threshold dynamically changing the upper and lower limits of a predetermined tolerance range ($-\theta_E \leq \theta \leq \theta_E$) of said steering angle θ based on an automobile velocity." As stated above, Sugitani does not disclose a steering angle threshold. Accordingly, Sugitani also does not disclose varying a steering angle threshold. Thus, claim 23 is further patentable over Sugitani. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugitani in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,389,342 to Kanda. The Examiner states that Sugitani disclose the steering control device recited in claim 1, but admits that Sugitani does not disclose wherein the turning mechanism and steering wheel are mechanically separated and an electrical coupling mechanism substitutes for a connecting mechanism. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As set forth above with respect to claim 1, Sugitani does not disclose all of the features of claim 1. Claims 2 and 24 depend from claim 1 and inherently recite all of the features of claim 1. The deficiencies of Sugitani with respect to claim 1 are not disclosed by Kanda. Accordingly, the combination of Sugitani and Kanda does not disclose all of the features of claim 1. Thus, claim 1 is patentable over Sugitani and Kanda. Claims 2 and 24 are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Each and every point raised in the Office Action dated November 17, 2006 has been addressed on the basis of the above amendments and remarks. In view of the foregoing it is believed that claims 1-39 are in condition for allowance and it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all pending claims be allowed and the case passed to issue.

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